

ON THE PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT: PARADOXES AND PERSPECTIVES

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to call attention to a series of perspectives useful in analyzing and understanding the problem of public responsibility. The importance of the theme itself is obvious, and its analysis in Brazil today is especially opportune in light of the current debate over institutionalizing new forms of public organization. In the first section we will attempt to delineate the problem in some detail, pointing out the paradoxes of political responsibility, particularly referring to the relationship between the formal and substantive aspects of responsibility. Next, we will consider several attempts to deal with the problem of public responsibility, ranging from the most short-range approaches, which emphasize individual moral ethics, to the most sophisticated ones, which deal with the possibility of extending the logics of market mechanisms to analysis of the political system. This inevitably leads to a rather broad discussion of the nature of the political system and the problems of public responsibility. Finally, the conclusions, necessarily general in nature, emphasize the necessity of seeking an optimal combination of mechanisms of political representation and institutional mechanisms for controlling administrative and governmental action more directly.

1. The Problem of Responsibility

The problem of responsibility for governmental decisions has been a classic theme in political and juridical literature. It becomes especially acute and pressing in countries which face serious problems of stimulating socioeconomic development, of ensuring adequate employment rates, of developing a foreign policy based on well-defined principles and objectives, etc. How can we guarantee that those who govern -- at all levels -- govern to the best of their ability and take the greatest possible responsibility for their decisions, and at the same time guarantee maximum global efficiency for the social system?

The classical solution to this problem essentially consists in distinguishing "administration" from "government:" administrators are those who execute the policies laid down by those who govern; those who govern, in turn, reach decisions in light of the political mandate which they received. The rectitude and integrity of administrators is assured if we accept the Weberian concept of bureaucracy: the separation of person from function, the explicit delineation of duties, obligations and limits of authority of governmental employees, the necessity for a written record of all actions and decisions. According to Weber, the rectitude and integrity of those who govern is in turn assured and provided for by the political party system, by the press, and, more specifically, by the political control of parliament over the actions of the executive branch.

There are two basic difficulties with this classical and apparently simple solution, one involving those who govern, the other involving those who administer. Carl J. Friedrich pointed out these difficulties as early as 1940, and it is difficult to express them better than he did. Friedrich called into question the efficacy of traditional political mechanisms in guaranteeing that those who govern will do so responsibly, even in such exemplary democracies as England and the United States:

At best, responsibility in a democracy will remain fragmentary because of the indistinct voice of the principle whose agents the officials are supposed to be -- the vast heterogeneous masses composing the people. Even the greatest faith in the common man (and I am prepared to carry this very far) cannot any longer justify a simple acceptance of the mythology of the "will of the people."¹

In another context, he refers to the "tremendous difficulty which the public encounters in understanding the broader implications of questions of governmental policy such as foreign relations, agricultural policy, or labor policy. As far as unemployment is concerned, the general public is only convinced of one thing: it should disappear."²

The first problem, then, is to establish effective political control over governmental action. The second problem refers to the fact that the separation between government and administration is not as clear-cut as the classical view might suggest. On the contrary, Friedrich points out, the classical argument forgets

(1) that many policies are not ordained with a stroke of the legislative or dictatorial pen but evolve slowly over long periods of time, and (2) administrative officials participate continuously and significantly in this process of evolving policy.

Or more conclusively:

Public policy, to put it flatly, is a continuous process, the formation of which is inseparable from its execution. Public policy is being formed as it is executed, and it is likewise being executed as it is being formed. Politics and administration play a continuous role in both formation and execution, though there is probably more politics in the formation of policy, more administration in the execution of it. In so far as particular individuals or groups are gaining or losing power of control in a given area, there is politics; in so far as officials act or propose action in the name of public interests, there is administration.³

This is not, therefore, a problem limited to developing nations, nor to countries whose political institutions, designed to fit the classical presidential or parliamentary molds, have undergone shocks and convulsions. However, the problem has become particularly striking in contemporary Brazil, where a variety of actions (laws, decree-laws, regulations, resolutions, instructions, rules) coexist, issued by a variety of organs (councils, superintendences, departments, state executive offices, ministries, legislatures, banks, the executive branch, all involving a greater

¹ Carl J. Friedrich, "Public Policy and the Nature of Administrative Responsibility," in Alan A. Altshuler, *The Politics of the Federal Bureaucracy* (New York and Toronto: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1968), p. 425. (Published initially in C. J. Friedrich and E. S. Mason, eds., *Public Policy: 1940* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).

²Friedrich, p. 422.

³Friedrich, p. 416.

or lesser degree of redistribution of power and control; in short, they all involve politics in the sense in which Carl Friedrich uses the word⁴

2. The Paradoxes of Responsibility

One of the fundamental problems related to responsibility, therefore, is the impossibility of establishing a really clear operational distinction between "government" and "administration." Even more, it is difficult for elements of the political system to control effectively even those actions considered explicitly governmental. This difficulty is apparently less important in a parliamentary regime, in which a government must respond continuously to parliament about its actions, than in a presidential regime, in which the "settling of accounts" is periodic and carried out under an electoral system which has its own laws and mechanisms, is open to various kinds of manipulation, and whose issues do not always have a direct relationship to the problems of effective governmental policy-making.

The consequence which concerns Carl Friedrich and liberal political thought in general, therefore, is the abuse of power, the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of power by those in office who pursue personal aims or ignore the political mandates which they received.

There is, however, an opposite concern aimed not so much toward the abuse of power as toward paralysis and inefficacy, which often is the result of the contradiction between systems of control and the reality of the governmental and administrative process. The mid-level administrator, whose position is not explicitly and unequivocally defined as political, is often subject to a system of conflicting pressures. On the one hand, he faces a body of rather precise and detailed norms which define his area of action, and which can eventually turn on him in case he violates them. On the other hand, he also has a clear notion of the objectives of his activities, and an equally clear perception that the norms which define his activities do not permit him to reach his objectives. He must choose, therefore, between adhering to the norms and abandoning his objectives, or adhering to his objectives and abandoning his norms. . .

Although it is a common error, it would be incorrect to think that this dilemma of the administrator is something accidental, a result of "inadequate norms," which should therefore be readjusted and redefined to conform to reality. In fact, the idea that it is possible to predict and establish in writing the functions and responsibilities of an intermediate-level administrator is a questionable carry-over from the Weberian concept of bureaucracy, a concept which conflicts with the idea of a continuum between administration and government as emphasized above by Friedrich.

The solution which the administrator provides for his dilemma essentially depends on his evaluation of the types of sanctions to which he will be liable for his actions. If the controls over him are formal-bureaucratic in nature, coming from higher echelons or from the courts, he will

⁴There are innumerable examples of this continuum in Brazilian politics and administration. One of the most notable is in the area of education, which is administered through a complex system of norms which range from constitutional provisions relative to the right to education, to the *Pareceres* of the Federal Education Council, and which include the norms and the administrative practices of the Ministry.

frequently tend to stick to the letter of his obligations, accepting as valid a strictly legalistic and definition of his assignment. As a result, he would assume responsibility in a strictly formal leaving the responsibility for the effective results of his acts to his superiors. Substantive in terms of results , thus rests with those who must respond politically for the conduct or to a combination of them.

As a result, responsibility turns into irresponsibility. division of labor into isolated and distinct "steps" might be faulty; the final product of activity might fail to satisfy the very men who govern. Nonetheless, the administrator continues to obey the norms, to follow told. As a result, the administrator is, strictly speaking, irresponsible for the consequences of his acts. A profound gap thus opens up between the legal-bureaucratic idea of responsibility and the consequences of actions.

This administrative machine is subject to constant political scrutiny, in such a way that administrative are interpreted only in terms of current political-ideological debates. Since such an interpretation solution is that the governmental employee will withdraw into bureaucratic ritual or make use of to hide administrative activities from public view. Another solution is that the bureaucrat will adopt literally the ideological norms which dominate political and ignore the problem of the complexity of the administrative process in favor of another form ritualism, one which. emphasizes ideological dogmas and postulates instead of bureaucratic regulations. The consequence, in terms of substantive irresponsibility, is the same.

is still a third sort of problem, which combines in an undoubtedly perverse form the two the abuse of power the of bureaucratic formalism. Anglo-Saxon countries appear to nations. The proliferation of norms and regulations characteristic of bureaucratic formalism a situation in which it is always possible to find rules which can be adapted to any type of effective system of political accountability for governmental actions exists.

We static and ritualistic irresponsibility of legal formalism, the legal irresponsibility of the activist, the irresponsibility of the politicized administrator, the irresponsibility and abuse of power which and regulations. In current language, these are problems of inefficiency, corruption, careerism, abuse of power. These are problems to. which no political-administrative system is immune, but which nevertheless must be dealt with and controlled. Ho can this be done?

3. The Problems and the Search for Solutions

The problems growing out of the paradoxes of responsibility are not simply theoretical, but refer directly to the political difficulties through which Brazil is passing and which have a definite impact on the prospects for their being solved.

There are many ways of approaching these problems, some of them technical-administrative in nature, some political, others based on the normative juridical system. It is important to state clearly, before going further, two fundamental principles. First, the problem of governmental responsibility and efficiency is not merely technical, since what one person finds efficient another may consider inefficient. There is, in other words, a question here of values, options, preferences, which turns the problem of governmental efficiency into an eminently political problem. But this leads directly to a second principle, which limits the value of a strictly political analysis: if we wish to understand how responsible the government is, it is not enough to identify the loyalties and normative intentions of the government, regardless of the values and objectives it may hold. There are enough examples of administrative failures, good intentions leading to bad results, no intentions producing good effects, etc., for us to understand perfectly well that there is no direct relationship between political inputs and governmental outputs. Based on this understanding studies have been made in recent years of decision-making processes and governmental outputs, as variables analytically distinct from those more classical factors which dealt with the basis and political development of governments. Another result has been a new awareness of the importance of resuming the study of the organizational and normative structure of political and administrative systems, and of examining their internal operations, rather than continuing to relegate the system to the "black box" status assigned it by the systems language of inputs and outputs.

There are a number of reasons why we may be dissatisfied with a particular government: because it pursues objectives which we dislike, or because it fails to carry out a policy which we support. Political debate often tends to treat these two difficulties similarly, systematically relating administrative failures either to subjective preferences or to "objective" class-related components of the dominant political groups. Although this is often undoubtedly true, there is also no doubt that the simple inability to implement effectively a coherent governmental policy has often been responsible for the failure of governments which had had considerable institutional and political support. The examples of the Argentine governments between the two Perón periods, or the example of Salvador Allende in Chile, should be sufficient for us to understand that this same phenomenon can exist in political regimes which are ideologically quite different. It would undoubtedly be of interest to examine how much of the inefficiency of the anti-Perón governments could be explained by the political opposition of the unions, or how much of the inefficiency of the Allende government is explained by the wide variety of internal and external political pressures which it suffered. But regardless of the explanations, both cases are examples of the paralysis and inaction of governments which then found themselves progressively losing their political and institutional bases of support, which then led to reduced efficiency, etc., until the final collapse. These examples show us the necessity for examining the problem of governmental responsibility and efficiency on its own merits, without neglecting the question of the meaning of governmental politics, but placing it figuratively in parentheses.

4.

One of the most common solutions, but also one of the most naive, is to reduce everything problem of honesty and moral integrity. According to this approach, corruption and abuse of light, therefore, is one of guaranteeing the personal integrity of public officials. There are three reasons why this approach is ingenuous. First, what is morally correct for some may be mor objectivity and permanence or transience of values, it is clear, for example, that a policy which rts the poor with government assistance may be considered dishonest and unwholesome when viewed from the perspective of the welfare state. An attitude of strict obedience to the letter of the sorts of social problems.

The implement intentions are also required. Honesty, by itself, is no guarantee of good results, and versa: good results may be achieved even if certain policies are carried out for ulterior motives, between individual interests and collective interests is not always of the zero-sum type; it is, in

Even though we reject the ethical solution when defined simplistically, it is far from when seen from a sociologically more complex point of view. From this perspective, it considered normal or acceptable by the social group to which the person practicing corruption Seen in this light, the phenomenon of corruption is likely to be much more common in highly in more static societies, where closer and more permanent ties between people limit the for illegitimate (i.e., abnormal) behavior. In other words, political corruption here is simply in the political-administrative system, while its absence would frequently be a reflection of a rigid idea very clearly when he says that corruption, in a sense,

is groups to make themselves effective within the political sphere. Corruption may be the of assimilating new groups into the political system by irregular means because the sy means for this purpose.⁵

of the classic examples of sociological analysis of corruption is by Robert K. Merton, in

these party machines go against the most general ethical norms of the operation of the American political system, but despite this survive, because they perform a series of important functions.

The functional deficiencies for the official structure generate an alternative (unofficial) structure to fulfill existing needs somewhat more effectively. Whatever its specific historical origins, the political machine persists as an apparatus for satisfying otherwise unfulfilled needs of diverse groups in the population.⁶

And, further on:

Examined for a moment apart from any moral considerations, the political apparatus operated by the Boss is effectively designed to perform these functions with a minimum of inefficiency. Holding the strings of diverse governmental divisions, bureaus and agencies in his competent hands, the Boss rationalizes the relations between public and private business. He serves as the business community's ambassador in the otherwise alien (and sometimes unfriendly) realm of government. And, in strict businesslike terms, he is well paid for his economic services to his respectable business clients.⁷

Merton's fundamental point is therefore that the party machine is functional and efficient, even though it does not obey the broadest ethical standards of the American political community (even though it may conform, for example, to certain standards of some ethnic or immigrant subcultures) .

A similar type of ad hoc organization in Latin America is identified by Fernando Henrique Cardoso as generally occurring not at the base of the social pyramid, but at its apex:

In some countries, the dominant private [sic] classes merge with the state apparatus, appropriating public positions, which remain public in name only, and make use of the state organization independent of the state, and limit, to the degree possible, the political mobilization of the lower classes. The bureaucratic-privatist cliques, organized more loosely than parties as rings of political-economic interests, play a growing and decisive role in the power game.⁸

These informal ad hoc systems of private interest articulation involving groups normally outside governmental channels seem to have been highly efficient in Brazil as well. In the American case, a large part of the negative moral connotations attached to local party machines disappeared once it was shown that they constituted an efficient means of promoting the well-being of marginal social groups. In the Brazilian case, to the degree that the strengthening of private economic groups and the development of the national economy reflect identical aims,

⁶Robert K. Merton, "Manifest and Latent Functions," in *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957, p. 127.

⁷Merton, pp. 129-130.

⁸Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "As Tradições do Desenvolvimento Associado," *Estudos CEBRAP*, n. 8, 1974, p. 56.

what from one point of view can be considered "corruption" or "abuse of power" becomes, from point of view, efficiency, pragmatism, rationality, etc. In both cases, problems crop up when for distribution in the form of economic or political benefits, become scarce, and the necessity for global allocation program of resources becomes urgent. It is under these circumstances that the politics regime itself.

In machines," ward heelers, bureaucratic-economic cliques .or "bureaucratic rings." Functional Merton, Cardoso, and Huntington, among others, show how, at one extreme, corruption extreme, it can limit. participation. From this point on the problem stops being a strictly moral or and takes on a specifically political dimension, involving the social distribution of resources.

- The economic model

is a widespread notion that competitive market mechanisms can be efficient producers this idea are to be found in the famous "invisible hand" which, according to classical economists, to provide a global harmony of the sum of individual interests. In fact, the demands of a competitive market actually do appear to force institutions to function at the greatest possible or else to succumb to the greater quality and efficiency. of their competitors. Thus we find benefits of market logic to the public administration sector. One manner of adaptation involves of the political party system as a "market" in which votes function as currency with which voters "buy" the political parties of their preference. The parties, in turn, become "firms" for the preference of the buyers, trying to produce whatever sells best - in other words, what since the subject lends itself to the development of hypothetical-deductive models . economic In any case, there are two sorts of assumptions involved in this analysis: first, that the buyers free to express their preferences, that is, that the market is essentially homogeneous; and

is policies, 9 not reality, in the developed countries, and are even less realistic in countries Brazil, the economic analysis frequently tends to become an elaboration of normative models, with what reality "should" be. Interest in this sort of work, therefore, centers on two models, as an exercise in formal logic; second, interest and validity of the market model as an ideal of democracy and political development

⁹James *The Calculus of Consent* Michigan Press, 1962), and the classic work by Anthony Downs, Harper and Bros., 1957).

(New York:

to be pursued.¹⁰ The relevance of this work to an understanding of actual contemporary processes, however, is limited¹¹.

We cannot conclude, however, that as a result the model of the private firm, typical of market systems, is irrelevant in the Brazilian politico-administrative context. In fact, the creation of governmental units designed along private enterprise lines has been an increasingly common phenomenon in Brazilian governmental administration, as an attempt to increase the level of governmental rationality and efficiency.

The justifications for this type of private organization in governmental units are varied. In the first place, such a structure permits great flexibility in terms of organizational form, salary levels, standards and procedures for staff recruitment and promotion, etc. In the second place, it allows for an effective decentralization of the decision-making process, so that decisions are made by the organization itself, rather than at the ministerial or high governmental level. This decentralization of decision-making primarily involves the ability to decide how resources should be allocated, according to the organization's own standards. Control ceases to be administrative and becomes essentially political, through the nomination by the government of those responsible for these state enterprises.

At the same time, and largely in governmental organizations which perform potentially lucrative services, economic mechanisms similar to those found in the marketplace begin to operate. The efficiency of state enterprises, measured in theory according to political standards, tends in fact to be evaluated in economic terms - budgetary deficits, profits, dividends, value of investments made, etc. One of the reasons this happens is, very simply, that economic indicators of this sort are available, and allow the calculation of a parameter on which comparative performance can be judged. In addition, however, there is the fact that the sectors of the governmental bureaucracy linked to these organizations, like any "technostructure," are interested in their growth, strengthening, and financial autonomy, and thus reinforce the importance ascribed to these performance measures.

Everything operates, therefore, as if the governmental units organized along business lines were actually operating as if they were subject to market mechanisms. One fundamental ingredient of market economies is still missing, however: the market itself, that is, competition. As a rule,

¹⁰This ideal, expressed by Buchanan and Tullock, is also proposed by Fábio Wanderley Reis, with an important qualification: the expansion of the "political market" cannot be done indiscriminately, but is limited by the necessity for a community system of values which develops within territorial boundaries. Or, in his words, through the "increasing expansion and strengthening of the solidarity of the territorial base as a condition for the elimination of barriers to the free interplay of interests, which grow out of other foci of solidarity and antagonism." While it is true that no market exists without a previous territorial solidarity (the peace of the Holy Alliance, according to Polanyi, served precisely this function), this does not seem to resolve the problems of individual motivation toward benefitting from public goods, which is Mancur Olson's problem with the logic of "political markets." Cf. Fábio Wanderley Reis, "Solidariedade, Interesses e Desenvolvimento Político: Um marco teórico e o Caso Brasileiro," in Jorge Balán, ed., *Centro e Periferia no Desenvolvimento Brasileiro* (São Paulo: Difusão Européia do Livro, 1974), p. 202. See also Mancur Olson, Jr., *The Logic of Collective Action* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968).

¹¹Perhaps the best example of an empirical evaluation of the market model of Hotelling-Downs is the work of Donald E. Stokes, "Spatial Models of Party Competition," *American Political Science Review*, 57, June, 1963.

state organizations set up along private lines - in the areas of finance, communications, land and sea transport, fuel, etc. - tend to be monopolies in their areas, or at least to possess enough control over their area so that they are in fact immune to competitive mechanisms, at the national level.

What is the consequence of this? The fact is that, at least theoretically, the principal justification for creating public organizations and companies along private lines relates precisely to the benefits to be derived from the market mechanism. It is worthwhile to cite, at some length, a description of how this mechanism operates, comparing the state and the private sector:

Consider for a moment the difference between an institution like a business enterprise which exists primarily in a market environment, and an institution like a state, an army or an established national church which does not. The prime difference between them is that the former must depend for its survival on the voluntary cooperation of the individuals who are related to it, whether as workers, capitalists, suppliers, or costumers, whereas the latter depends for its survival on its power to coerce individuals into cooperating with it (...) In a well- operated free market there is always an "elsewhere's" - this is the concept of pure competition as the economist understands it, and this is how competition limits the power of the organizer or the entrepreneur. In a very real sense, therefore, the business man is responsible to those persons who are affected by his actions, in the sense that he is in their power as much as they are in his¹².

In this seminal though little-known article, Boulding proceeds to show how the creation of monopolies and oligopolies limits these qualities of the market economy, and then directs attention to mechanisms, primarily electoral mechanisms which operate very much like a market place, inside the political-governmental system.

It is important to keep in mind here that Boulding is interested not only in the efficiency of organizational systems, but also in the responsibility which these organizations feel toward the individuals with whom they must relate. There is no doubt that inefficiency tends to be irresponsible, especially in times of scarcity or necessity; but the inverse is in no way necessarily true: efficiency and irresponsibility can occur together. The virtues of homo economicus are minor, in Boulding's view, as are his sins. Here the believer joins the economist, and as Boulding puts it:

Economic man dwells in Limbo - he is not good enough for Heaven or bad enough for Hell. His virtues are minor virtues: he is punctual, courteous, honest, truthful, painstaking, thrifty, hardworking. His vices are minor vices - niggardliness, parsimoniousness , chicanery. Even the covetousness of which he is often accused is a playful and innocent thing compared with the dreadful covetousness of the proud. On the whole he escapes the deadly sins, for his very vulgarity saves him from pride (how much better, for instance, is the commercial vulgarity of Coca-Cola than the heroic diabolism of Hitler) . But he misses also the Great Virtues, and in that he is less than Man, for God has made man for himself,

¹²Kenneth E. Boulding, "The Principle of Personal Responsibility," in *Beyond Economics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Paperback, 1970), p. 215. (Originally presented to the meeting of the Catholic Economic Association in December, 1953.)

and he has an ineradicable hunger for the Divine, the heroic, the sanctified and the uneconomic¹³.

It is hardly necessary to share Kenneth Boulding's religious philosophy to agree with his view of the inadequacy of individualistic market motivations as the basis for the efficient and responsible behavior of the manager. This inadequacy in fact can be seen in two ways. At one extreme, there is little doubt today that the competitive market as a spontaneous and natural social organization is a myth - on the contrary, we know the extent to which it was the fruit of a persistent and systematic effort to implant a political-social order designed to facilitate its operation.¹⁴ On the other hand, just as the economic, political and social order of the market did not create itself, so the market is incapable of introducing rationality and responsibility in the management of public works and social programs.

The absence of competition, combined with a strong appreciation for the organizational and administrative forms of the private firm, can lead to two kinds of consequences. First, in the case of well-established monopolies which are relatively invulnerable to important social pressures, there is a progressive decline in efficiency, obeying a general rule of reduced effort, or the general law of entropy. Under other circumstances, there may be a tendency towards the progressive strengthening and growth of an institution, as a way of preserving its autonomy and the positions occupied by the members of the organization as well. This can take several forms, such as an exclusive emphasis on economically profitable activities, in detriment to others of possible greater social importance; or by obtaining advantageous terms of credit, financing, pricing, monopoly positioning, etc., which guarantee a steady growth in resources and the appearance of good economic results¹⁵

The relations between the market system and the public sector were discussed recently by Albert Hirschman, in a way which differs from the classical attempts to duplicate in the political sphere the competitive mechanisms which lead to rationality in the marketplace.¹⁶ In Hirschman's opinion, there are mechanisms in the political sphere which can also lead to good operation of governmental units, but these mechanisms are radically different from the economic ones. While economic rationality is based on the capacity of consumers, workers, etc., to choose a given good

¹³Boulding, p. 218.

¹⁴"The road to the free market was opened and kept open by an enormous increase in continuous, centrally organized and controlled interventionism. To make Adam Smith's 'simple and natural liberty' compatible with the needs of a human society was a most complicated affair." (Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Beacon Paperback, 1957), p. 140. First edition, 1944.) The thesis is striking and the historical evidence presented by Polanyi is no less convincing.

¹⁵John Kenneth Galbraith, in *The New Industrial State* provides a vision of mechanisms which lead to a continuous growth and strengthening of large organizations, less as a result of growing profits than as a result of an increase in the power of the "technostructure," a term which he himself suggests. For an analysis of this tendency in a large Brazilian state organization, see Getúlio Carvalho, "Petrobrás: duas décadas e um dilema," *Revista de Administração Pública* Vol. 9, March 1975, pp. 14-39.

¹⁶Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty - Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

or
and
this view, a mere aggregation of individual wills expressed in
objectives,
cemented
vidual preferences .

are drawing dangerously close here to one of the central themes of political
the bases for collective, "political" action in contrast with individual, "economic"
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other
Hegel,
individual,
as the basis for
a
will,"
Marx
collective
being here much more the German philosopher than the English economist.
economist. (18)

importance of Hirschman's contribution can now be better gauged: what he suggests
not some kind of inventive way of bringing economics into politics, but a conceptual link which
it possible to relate and differentiate political from economic mechanisms. The fact is that,
the "organic" perspective was carried to such levels of perversion (Hitler's
which Boulding referred, various types of nationalism, totalitarian states of the past
present) that liberal political thought began to focus more and more on the search for
be based, ignoring therefore any
of the "organic" approach which might be important either as description or even as
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17 to maximize a scarce good, no matter
it may be. It is in this sense that Buchanan and Tullock suggest an "economic" analysis of politics. If
refers to collective, global action, then it should be possible to speak also of a "political" economy,
to the social and institutional aspects of economic activity. Beyond this, there also exist an economic

18 German, Fábio Wanderley Reis considers classes, ethnic groups, and even nations
as private forms of loyalties to be eventually replaced by a system of broad value-based consensus which
serve as the basis for a general political market. (See Note 10 above). In fact, the outbreak of ethnic and
conflicts which the world has witnessed in the last decade does not seem to indicate a historical pro-
of disappearance of those elements of basic identification of persons and groups, but instead points to a future
in which these forms or organization tend to reinforce each other and gain strength, in terms of "minority

19 an example of a non-economic economy, it is worthwhile citing Polanyi: "The outstanding discovery
recent historical and anthropological research is that man's economy, as a rule, is submerged in his social
He. does not act so as to safeguard his social standing, his social claims, his social assets. He values

6.- Conclusion: Social and Institutional Controls

There is no doubt that the problem of the substantive responsibility of government would be solved either if the so-called "market politics" functioned effectively, or if the "collective will" were clearly and explicitly expressed. Since neither condition exists, in the day-to-day reality in which we live, it seems that we will have to settle for a mixture: on one hand, the existence of competitive mechanisms which prevent the freezing of positions and privileges, on the other, the existence of group, ethnic, regional, and sub-cultural solidarities which provide individuals with a social base for self-identification and a sense of belonging.

. At this point, we can refer back to Carl Friedrich's work. For the reasons just cited, he is skeptical about the ability of routine political mechanisms to control the behavior of public officials, and proposes two alternative solutions: a professional type of control, and a consensual type of control. The first solution argues that public officials who belong to professional associations will tend to behave according to the standards of seriousness, honesty, professional efficiency, etc., of their peers. Since their peers are in fact their reference group, this does not involve a simple coercive and external control, but rather the operation of the standards and norms which constitute an integral part of the public official's own personality and social identity. The second solution, which can be seen as a supplement to the first, involves guaranteeing a constant flow of information and contacts between the public official and his public, in such a way as to ensure that his behavior does not stray too far from "common sense." The contacts between the public and the public administration, and the presence of a press which closely follows governmental actions, are two of the means in the modern service-state of maintaining this coherence of behavioral style and norms .

Taken in isolation, these forms of control can only function in societies in which problems of profound social inequality have already been solved, and even under these circumstances they tend to produce a crystallization of interest groups acting under the guise of "professional identity" or a search for the "common good." Herman Finer has made a vigorous reply to Friedrich's ideas, adopting the position of the political liberal in its most radical form. One of the aspects which he emphasizes is precisely the conservatism of professional groups which combat the appearance of new ideas and new practices in their fields. Let us imagine, he writes, that the administrator is a pioneer in his field, while his professional group is conservative. When is he acting responsibly or irresponsibly? When he follows preestablished norms, or when he opens new roads, leading the search for new alternatives?²⁰

In countries like Brazil, with the well-known vicissitudes of its political market (as well as of many other markets, including the market for ideas), this type of difficulty is even more

material goods only in so far as they serve this end. Neither the process of production nor that of distribution is linked to specific economic interests attached to the possession of goods; but every single step in that process is geared to a number of social interests which eventually ensure that the required step be taken." (*The Great Transformation*, p. 48.)

²⁰Herman Finer, "Administrative Responsibility in Democratic Government," in Alan A. Altshuler, *The Politics of the Federal Bureaucracy*, p. 429. (Originally published in the *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 1, 1949.)

acute. It is through this perspective that we should view the problem of technocracy - the restriction and monopolization of decision-making areas under the guise of professional and technical competence. It is through this perspective that we should examine the so-called "bureaucratic rings" - forms of interaction and collaboration between the public sector and some groups in the private sector, to the exclusion of others. It is in fact for precisely this reason that organic political ideologies, from Naziism to the blandest form of Christian solidarity met the same fate: the opprobrium of liberal thought. They frequently served to cover up, under the guise of collective organizations, the maintenance and freezing of inequality, injustice, privilege and oppression.

The conclusion is rather trivial, but nonetheless important: virtue lies in the middle way. The responsibility of the public official cannot be established exclusively through mechanisms related to the process of representation through political parties, for two types of reasons: those which refer to the indifferentiation, or to the continuum which exists between government and administration, on one hand, and those which involve the inability to formulate a sufficiently explicit and sophisticated "collective will" in the political party universe, on the other. Further, responsibility cannot rest either on standards of "professional competence," "public spirit" or on any other sort of categorical imperatives which may govern the action of individuals. This is so not just because the flesh is weak, and good reasons (or rationalizations) can always be found for dubious action, but primarily because the absence of competitive mechanisms permits a consolidation of privilege and irrationality which then uses coercion to justify its permanence in the name of universal values.

Even though political theory, perhaps overly influenced by classical liberal thought, has contributed little along these lines it is essential that we think about the problem of implanting norms for public responsibility as a process which embodies these two aspects. It should include the free play of political forces, which ensures that the preferences and choices of social groups will be heard. It should include the scrutiny of public actions by organizations of public opinion, the press and parliament; but it should also include the progressive incorporation of organized social groups which are capable of exercising direct, constant and informal control over the daily behavior of men in government.

But wouldn't this in the last analysis lead us to an excess of controls, and thus to a paralysis of the decision-making process, a return to the ritualism of formal responsibility, etc.? To the extent that political legitimacy exists, guaranteed by political mechanisms based on representation, in principle there ought to be pressure for action, and conditions for bringing it about.

It is important to note, in this context, an important transformation through which all political systems based on representation have passed, but which has nevertheless not been systematically incorporated into the ideologies which explain and justify these systems. We are referring to the gradual reduction in identification between political parties and social classes, defining social classes according to the social divisions of labor.

In fact, the historical analysis made by Stein Rokkan, among others, of the evolution of European political systems, shows that cleavages based on class divisions are relatively recent, becoming marked in the mid-1800's and reaching their height in the first decades of the 20th

century²¹ In earlier periods, national or regional cleavages predominated, pitting State against Church, country against city, center against periphery, dominant culture against dominated culture. It is clear that these divisions also corresponded to unequal distribution of goods and resources; but it is only beginning in the 19th century, with the installation of a market economy on a continental scale in Europe, that politics came to assume explicitly class-based overtones, in terms of workers' parties (Communists, socialists, social-democrats) vs. bourgeois parties (liberals, conservatives, Catholics, monarchists, etc.). .

Despite the fact that this class identification still retains much of its strength, particularly in countries where the union structure and workers' political parties were integrated, it has tended to decline in importance since the First World War. There are many explanations for this fact, and one of them is that, to the degree that the immediate problems of economic survival and security are resolved, the importance which an individual ascribes to his social role as producer declines in relation to other roles, which relate to his culture, his group identification, and, especially, to himself as a consumer of goods produced by society. It is in this context that we can understand the emergence, in the most developed nations, of an increasingly strong concern for the consumer as the subject of political and administrative demands, necessities and actions. It is perhaps in this light that we can view the Scandinavian institution of the Ombudsman, the public defender who can, in society's name, investigate and define the responsibility of the administration and of the government in order to benefit not a particular class, but the community as a whole. Even though they are still found only in a few countries, the figure of the Ombudsman, along with the organization of society in terms of consumption and not just production, indicate possible ways of redefining the mechanisms of political responsibility for managers, which the traditional representative political system did not include.

But aren't these phenomena appropriate only in post-industrial societies, and thus irrelevant to countries like Brazil where minimal standards of health, nutrition, and steady work are not yet being provided for a great portion of the population? Indeed, the fact that Brazil has been developing by using advanced labor-saving technology seems to make ever more distant the moment when all Brazilians will be duly integrated into the productive system and will find in this integration a basic source of social and political identification. Perhaps it would be more reasonable to suppose that the country can, in a manner of speaking, leap from the industrial revolution stage to the post-industrial society, in which the means through which people identify themselves and their ties to one another would involve many dimensions other than just the social division of labor in the strict sense of the word. This would evidently require new forms of social organization and, concomitantly, new mechanisms for controlling the responsibility of public officials.

There are undoubtedly many other things to be done before a political-administrative system with a high degree of responsibility can be achieved. One of the most important involves reform of the judicial system. This reform cannot consist of a simple rewriting or codification of the laws, nor even a debureaucratizing or accelerating of justice. More than that, reform must be based on the creation of a judicial system which is truly capable of carrying out its substantive legislative responsibilities, and not just adhering to legal forms. This is not a simple matter, and

²¹See for example, S. M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), Introduction.

this article is not the place to try to discuss the issue, But what is indispensable is that the judicial system be able to cut through the Gordian knot of rules and legislation, basing its actions on universal values and principles. The key to doing this undoubtedly lies in restoring it to the institutional and political status which it once held in our system.

Another sort of reform involves the problems of policy implementation and accounting of economic activity in the government sphere. Formal accounting controls must be substituted by other controls of the program-budget type, which allow a direct comparison of the results obtained with the objectives explicitly drawn up by the agencies and by the government. The role of institutions like the Tribunal de Contas should be reevaluated, since it might be necessary to give the Tribunal a function more closely involving control of the substantive objectives of governmental activities.

These two examples are sufficient to provide an idea of the size of the problem. It makes no sense to say that government A is responsible and government B is irresponsible, in a general sense. The establishment of governmental and administrative responsibility is possible and achievable, as a complex process which necessarily includes both technical and political aspects, increased participation and Institutionalization - and, as a result, advances and retreats. This is enough for us to see that we cannot, as the naive moralist might wish, treat the problem of responsibility in isolation. But it also does not allow us to discard it until "later," when other "more important" problems are already solved. Since we are in fact discussing the behavior of people who manage the resources of society, responsibility is a central political theme of the here and now, just as it always has been and always will be.